

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Ana Region

IN THE MATTER OF:

Golden Cheese Company of California)	Complaint No. R8-2002-0081
1138 West Rincon Street)	for
Corona, CA 92880)	Administrative Civil Liability
	(Amended November 27, 2002)

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE THAT:

1. Golden Cheese Company of California (GCCC) has violated provisions of law for which the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region (hereinafter Board), may impose administrative civil liability pursuant to California Water Code Section 13385.
2. A hearing concerning this complaint will be held before the Board within 60 days of the date of issuance of this complaint, unless GCCC waives its right to a hearing. Waiver procedures are specified on Page 7 of this complaint. If the hearing on this matter is not waived, the hearing will be held during the Board's regular meeting on December 3, 2002, in the City Council Chambers, City of Loma Linda, California. The meeting begins at 9:00 a.m. GCCC or its representative will have the opportunity to appear and be heard and to contest the allegations in this complaint and the imposition of civil liability by the Board. An agenda announcement for the meeting will be mailed to you not less than 10 days prior to the hearing date.
3. If a hearing is held on this matter, the Board will consider whether to affirm, reject, or modify the proposed administrative civil liability or whether to refer the matter to the Attorney General for recovery of judicial civil liability.
4. This Complaint addresses four different incidents where raw sewage and/or other wastes were discharged to Rincon Street in Corona. These discharges occurred on June 19, 2001, August 22/23, 2001, November 13, 2001, and March 21, 2002.

On June 29, 2001, GCCC discharged raw sewage mixed with process wastes to Rincon Street thereby violating the provision of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana River Basin prohibiting the discharge of untreated sewage. This prohibition states:

“The discharge of untreated sewage to any surface water stream, natural or man-made, or to any drainage system intended to convey stormwater runoff to surface water streams, is prohibited.”

5. On August 22/23, 2001, November 13, 2001, and on March 21, 2002, GCCC is alleged to have violated Provisions A.1, A.2, A.6.a.v, and B.3 of the General Industrial Activity Storm Water Permit, NPDES No. CAS000001 (General Permit). The WDID number for the facility is 833S005553. GCCC failed to properly develop and implement an effective Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Monitoring and Reporting Requirements and discharged non-storm water and storm water containing pollutants to waters of the United States from the facility. GCCC did not implement appropriate best management practices (BMPs) at the facility.

A) The General Permit Provision A.1 provides:

“Except as allowed in Special Conditions (D.1.) of this General Permit, materials other than storm water (non-storm water) that discharge either directly or indirectly into waters of the United States are prohibited. Prohibited non-storm water discharges must be either eliminated or permitted by a separate NPDES permit.”

B) The General Permit Provision A (6)(a)(v) provides:

“Facility operators shall investigate the facility to identify all non-storm water discharges and their sources. As part of this investigation, all drains (inlets and outlets) shall be evaluated to identify whether they connect to the storm drain system.

All non-storm water discharges shall be described. This shall include the source, quantity, frequency, and characteristics of the non-storm water discharges and associated drainage area.

Non-storm water discharges that contain significant quantities of pollutants or that do not meet the conditions provided in Special Conditions D are prohibited by this General Permit (Examples of prohibited non-storm water discharges are contact and non-contact cooling water, boiler blowdown, rinse water, wash water, etc.)”

C) The General Permit Provision B.3 provides:

“Facility operators covered by this General Permit must reduce or prevent pollutants associated with industrial activity in storm water discharges and authorized non-storm water discharges through implementation of BAT for toxic and non-conventional pollutants and

BCT for conventional pollutants. Development and implementation of a SWPPP that complies with the requirements in Section A of the General Permit and that includes BMPs that achieve BAT/BCT constitutes compliance with this requirement.”

6. This Complaint is based on the following facts:

- A) On June 29, 2001, Regional Board staff observed a foul-smelling, milky-colored liquid flowing along Rincon Street. Staff traced this liquid back to the GCCC facility located at 1138 Rincon Street.
 - i) The City of Corona NPDES inspector was informed of the incident by Regional Board staff. The City of Corona inspector arrived shortly thereafter and discussed this discharge with GCCC. Facility personnel were unaware that a spill had occurred.
 - ii) Inspection of the facility by Board staff revealed that the spill was coming from a manhole located on an embankment at the front of GCCC’s property on Rincon Street.
 - iii) The manhole is the connection point where GCCC and the nearby Corona Energy Partners (Cogen Plant) discharge their sewage and process wastewater into the Santa Ana Regional Interceptor (SARI) line under permit from the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA). There is a lateral line leading from the manhole to the SARI line. It is unknown how long the overflow had occurred prior to Regional Board staff noticing the spill. The flow went north across Rincon Street and flowed west parallel to Rincon Street and under Auburndale Street. This storm drainage system along Rincon Street is considered to be a tributary to Temescal Creek, which is approximately 100 yards from the intersection of Rincon Street and Auburndale Street. At the time of the spill investigation, it could not be determined if the discharge actually entered Temescal Creek.
 - iv) In a July 3, 2001 letter, GCCC stated that the spill occurred from the manhole located on the south side of Rincon Street due to scale build up in the lateral line leading from GCCC to the SARI line and/or because GCCC’s flow exceeded the design capacity of the lateral line. Additional information provided by SAWPA, Western Municipal Water District (WMWD), and the City of Corona indicates that the spill resulted from a lack of maintenance of the lateral line, excessive flow from GCCC, and a ¾” PVC pipe that was installed in the manhole to stabilize the 3” discharge pipe from the Cogen Plant.

- v) Sewage flowed approximately 0.6 miles to the intersection of Rincon and Auburndale Streets and then to a channel tributary to Temescal Creek. Approximately 7,800 gallons were discharged to Rincon Street (amount based on a conservative estimate based on observation of an approximate wet area of 0.6 miles times 24 inches wide by 2 inches deep).
 - vi) The wastes discharged originated from GCCC.
- B) On August 22, 2001, a hot summer day, Regional Board staff observed a foul-smelling, milky-colored liquid flowing along Rincon Street.
- i) Staff tracked this discharge to GCCC's facility and determined that this non-storm water discharge originated from the storm water discharge vault located on an embankment in front of GCCC's facility on Rincon Street. The pH measurement of this discharge was 5 pH units. Board staff left a voice mail message for GCCC's Plant Manager, notifying him of the observed discharge and its origin and directing that GCCC take measures to prevent further discharges.
 - ii) The following day, Regional Board staff and a City of Corona inspector observed that the discharge was continuing.
 - iii) On August 23, 2001, Regional Board staff and the City of Corona inspector met GCCC's Plant Manager and inspected the facility. The inspection revealed several sources of non-storm water discharges, poor housekeeping practices, chemical spills, and cheese wastes at a number of locations around the exterior grounds of the facility.
 - iv) On the west side of the facility a non-storm water flow was measured at 9 pH units. On the east side of the facility a non-storm water flow was measured at 5 and 5.5 pH units. Liquid near a storm drain on the northeast area of the facility was measured at 5 pH units. At the parking lot at the north end of the facility, there was a rusty colored puddle near a storm drain with a pH at 9 pH units.
 - v) Normally, non-storm water discharges from the facility are collected in an on-site underground vault (collection vault) from which they are pumped into the facility's wastewater treatment system and discharged into the SARI line.
 - vi) The August 22 and 23, 2001 non-storm water discharges were the direct result of a pump failure in the collection vault. GCCC

determined that the pump was not operating properly. With the pump malfunctioning, the wastewater collected in the vault overflowed and entered a second vault on the north perimeter of the property, next to Rincon Street.

vii) The second vault, located next to Rincon Street, was inspected by Regional Board staff, and it contained a milky, rancid-smelling liquid. This liquid was overflowing from the second vault into Rincon Street. The liquid in the second vault measured between 3 and 4 pH units. The second vault was the source of the liquid waste discharged onto Rincon Street as observed on August 22 and 23, 2001.

viii) On August 22 and 23, 2001, the liquid waste flowed from the second vault, located adjacent to Rincon Street, for approximately 0.6 miles to the intersection of Rincon and Auburndale, then into a channel tributary to Temescal Creek. None of the liquid waste was recovered; at a minimum, 7,800 gallons on each of the noted days were discharged to a tributary of Temescal Creek (based on an estimate of 0.6 miles times 24 inches wide by 2 inches deep.)

- C) On November 13, 2001, representatives from the WMWD and the City of Corona observed a discharge of liquid from GCCC.
- i) Information conveyed to Regional Board staff indicates that GCCC pumped storm water commingled with other wastes from the site, to Rincon Street.
 - ii) Samples obtained by the other agencies from the November 13, 2001 release were analyzed and the results indicated the following levels of pollutants:

<i>CONTAMINANT</i>	<i>LEVEL FOUND IN SAMPLE</i>
Specific Conductance	970 unhom/cm3
Total Suspended Solids	53 mg/l
Biological Oxygen Demand	44 mg/l
Copper	260 ug/l
Zinc	480 ug/l

These results indicate that the discharge contained pollutants.

- D) On March 21, 2002, GCCC had another non-storm water release. A spill of demineralized water occurred as the result of a line failure and resulted in an unauthorized discharge to Rincon Street. Regional Board staff responded and obtained a sample of the discharge. It was

later determined that the discharge did not have any pollutants above regulatory limits.

7. As indicated above, discharges from GCCC that flow along Rincon Street are tributary to Temescal Creek (Reach 1A), and Temescal Creek is tributary to the Santa Ana River (Reach 3). The beneficial uses of the Santa Ana River, Reach 3, and Temescal Creek, Reach 1A, include: agricultural supply; industrial service supply (Temescal Creek only); groundwater recharge; water contact recreation; non-contact water recreation; warm freshwater habitat; wildlife habitat; rare, threatened and endangered species habitat; and spawning (Temescal Creek only).
8. Pursuant to Section 13385(c), the Board is authorized to administratively assess civil liability in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for each day in which the violation occurs.
9. For the June 29, 2001 discharge, in accordance with Water Code Section 13385(c), the total maximum liability for the violation cited is \$10,000 for one day of discharge.
10. For the August 22 and 23, 2001 discharge, in accordance with Water Code Section 13385(c), the total maximum liability for the violation cited above is \$20,000 for two days of discharge.
11. For the November 13, 2001 discharge, in accordance with Water Code Section 13385(c), the total maximum liability for the violation cited is \$10,000 for one day of discharge. No liability has been assessed for the March 21, 2002 discharge.

Regional Board staff spent approximately 100 hours investigating the June 29, 2001 incident, 40 hours for the August 22/23, 2001 incident and 5 hours for the November 13, 2001 incident (@\$70.00 per hour, the total cost for staff time is \$10,150.00). The cost savings from exceeding the flow limitations could not be estimated, as the flow meter was not fully operational at the time of the incident. GCCC saved approximately \$500.00 by not properly maintaining the pumps for the collection sump and \$2,500.00 by not implementing other BMPs at the site.

12. Section 13385 (e) specifies factors that the Board shall consider in establishing the amount of civil liability. These factors include: nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the violation, and, with respect to the discharger, the ability to pay, any prior history of violations, the degree of culpability, economic benefit or savings, if any, resulting from the violation, and other matters that justice may require. At a minimum, liability shall be assessed at a level that recovers the economic benefits, if any, derived from the acts that constitute the violation. The factors are evaluated in the following table:

Factor	Comment
A. Nature, Circumstances, Extent and Gravity of Violation	<p>The June 29, 2001 discharge was a foul-smelling, milky-colored liquid. August 22/23, 2001: Pollutants: sample results indicate the wastewater contained: 4,080 umhos/cm³ specific conductance, 5.5 pH units, 3,400 mg/l total dissolved solids, 169 mg/l Calcium, trace amounts of Boron, 33.4 mg/l Iron, 25.3 mg/l Magnesium, 149 mg/l Potassium, 545 mg/l Sodium, 525 mg/l total hardness, 935 mg/l total alkalinity as CaCO₃, 433 mg/l Chloride, 161mg/l Sulfate, 126 mg/l ammonia-N, 79.8 mg/l total Phosphorus and 0.07 mg/l Fluoride. Volume: Approximately 15,600 gallons total, for two days spillage</p> <p>November 13, 2001: Pollutants: sample results indicated 970 umhom/cm³ Specific Conductance, 53 mg/l TSS, 44 mg/l BOD, 260 ug/l Copper, and 480 ug/l Zinc . Volume: undetermined.</p> <p>Sensitivity of Nearby Receiving Waters: Santa Ana River, Reach 3, is listed on the 303(d) list as an impaired waterbody.</p> <p>Beneficial Uses: As described above, the Temescal Creek and Santa Ana River have potential or existing beneficial uses which might have been adversely impacted by the discharge if storm water/urban runoff further carried the pollutants into the waterways.</p>
B. Culpability	The discharger violated the terms of the General Permit by failing to implement appropriate BMPs, by not maintaining the pumps and level controls in the vault and by discharging non-storm water containing pollutants.
C. Economic Benefit or Savings	<p>GCCC saved approximately \$500.00 by not properly maintaining the pumps for the collection sump.</p> <p>GCCC saved over \$2,500.00 by not implementing other BMPs at the site. The cost it would have incurred to treat the wastewater in its own wastewater treatment unit is unknown.</p>
D. Prior History of Violations	<p>The site has had non-storm water discharges observed prior to this incident. In November 2000, a discharge was observed coming from the Rincon Street vault and flowing down Rincon Street. Staff were told that it was due to a faulty valve.</p> <p>In 1998, GCCC was cited by USEPA for high pH and BOD discharges to the SARI line.</p>
E. Staff Costs	Regional Board staff spent at least a total of 145 hours investigating these incidents (@\$70.00 per hour, the total cost for staff time is \$10,150.00).
F. Ability to pay	The discharger has not provided any information to indicate that it is unable to pay the proposed amount.

14. The total maximum liability for the three discharges is \$40,000. After consideration of the above factors, the Executive Officer proposes civil liability be imposed on GCCC in the amount of \$30,000.

15. GCCC has indicated that it wishes to waive its right to a hearing in this matter. GCCC has agreed to participate in a supplemental environmental project (SEP) that will benefit the Upper Santa Ana Watershed. The proposed SEP is to contribute \$20,000 of the assessed liability towards

cleanup of the perchlorate contamination in the groundwater in the Colton-Rialto area. The balance of the assessment shall be paid to the State Water Resources Control Board. The waiver of hearing form includes this proposed SEP. Please sign the attached waiver, which is on the last page of this Complaint, and return it, together with the bottom portion of the invoice and a check for \$10,000 (made payable to the State Water Resources Control Board), to the State Water Resources Control Board in the preprinted enclosed envelope. A copy of the waiver form and the \$20,000 payment for the SEP shall be mailed to the Regional Board office.

If you have any questions concerning this complaint, contact Michael Adackapara at (909) 782-3238, or Ann Iaali at (909) 320-2182. All legal questions should be addressed to Jorge Leon, the Board's Staff Counsel, at (916) 341-5180.

11-27-02

Date



Gerard J. Thibeault
Executive Officer

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Ana Region

IN THE MATTER OF:

Golden Cheese Company of California)	Complaint No. R8-2002-0081
1138 West Rincon Street)	for
Corona, California 92880)	Administrative Civil Liability

Waiver of Hearing

I agree to waive Golden Cheese Company of California's (GCCC) right to a hearing before the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board with regard to the violations alleged in Complaint No. R8-2002-0081. I have enclosed the bottom portion of the invoice and a check for \$10,000 payable to the State Water Resources Control Board for part of the amount of the proposed liability in Paragraph 15 of Complaint No. R8-2002-0081. I understand that I am giving up GCCC's right to be heard and to argue against the allegations made in the Complaint No. R8-2002-0081, and against the imposition of, and amount of, civil liability.

On behalf of GCCC, I agree to participate in a supplemental environmental project (SEP). The balance of the assessment (\$20,000) will be contributed towards abating the perchlorate groundwater contamination in the Colton-Rialto area and payment is being forwarded to the Regional Board office.

Date

for Golden Cheese Company of California

Please use the enclosed, preprinted envelope for returning this waiver form, bottom portion of the invoice and the payment (\$10,000). The amount for the SEP should be forwarded in a separate envelope to the Regional Board office.